

Commercial Update

A publication of the U.S. Department of Commerce, International Trade Administration, Central and Eastern Europe Business Information Center in cooperation with the U.S. Agency for International Development

January 2001

EcoLinks Program: Helping Create Opportunities for U.S. Companies

Central and Eastern Europe is quickly becoming one of the best prospects for U.S. exporters of environmental technology. Already suffering from decades of environmental neglect, states in the region face the prospect of conforming with stringent European Union environmental standards as they seek EU membership in the coming years.

In order to facilitate the transfer of U.S. technology to the region and foster the growth of environmentally sustainable economies, the EcoLinks Trade and Investment program was launched by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Commerce and several environmental organizations.

The mission of the EcoLinks Trade and Investment program is to enhance the flow of environmental trade and investment by fostering business links and partnerships between U.S. environmental goods and service providers, businesses, and municipalities in the region. To that end, the U.S. Department of Commerce's Commercial Service has placed EcoLinks representatives throughout the region including: Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, and Romania.

EcoLinks representatives work with local businesses, governments, and professional associations in their respective countries to identify their individual environmental needs. Environmental demands cut across the full spectrum of environmental challenges, from remediation, waste management, and pollution control to pollution prevention, cleaner production, and production of environmentally friendly goods and

services. Working with USAID's Global Technology Network (GTN), an online network of over 4,100 U.S. environmental companies and technology organizations, they are able to match the needs of the region's companies with applicable and qualified U.S. technology and service providers.

When promising business matches are identified, EcoLinks representatives become available to help facilitate meetings between potential U.S. and in-country business partners and clients. EcoLinks representatives also assist in mobilizing a full range of U.S. government resources and services designed to address project financing barriers. These resources include the Commercial Service, the Export-Import (EXIM) Bank, the Trade and Development Agency, and the Overseas Private Investment Corporation (OPIC).

In an effort to better promote environmental opportunities, the Central and Eastern Europe Business Information Center (CEEIBIC), working with the U.S. Commercial Service, will now publish EcoLinks trade and investment opportunities regularly in this publication. CEEIBIC is also launching an EcoLinks section as part of the trade and investment opportunities section of CEEBICnet.

For more information on the EcoLinks program, go to www.ecolinks.org.

Inside this Issue...

Eye on Southeast Europe	2
Ecolinks Trade and Investment Leads	4
Ex-Im Bank's Environmental Export Program	6
Calendar of Events	7

Eye on Southeast Europe

Outlook for Romania

*by Cristina Marine, International Trade Specialist,
CEEBC*

Situated in southeastern Europe, north of the Balkan peninsula in the Lower Danube basin and bordering the Black Sea, Romania is the second largest market in Central and Eastern Europe. With a population of 22 million, Romania's geographic location offers easy access to the markets of Western and Central Europe, the Middle East, and the Newly Independent States (NIS). These markets represent over 200 million potential customers. The country has a wealth of natural resources, including fertile soil, mineral deposits, and vast forests. Its southeastern border, the Black Sea, provides shipping access to the Mediterranean Sea and the Suez Canal, and the Danube-Rhine-Main Canal connects Romania to the North Sea.

For the past 10 years, Romania's progress toward establishing a functional market economy has followed a sinuous path. However, experts agree that the country has immense potential for business opportunities and economic growth.

During the first 10 months of 2000, exports were up 23.5 percent over 1999. Clothes and accessories, metallurgical products, footwear, machines, electric equipment, oil products, engines, turbines, mechanical devices, furniture, and chemical products featured higher percentages in the exports' structure. Imports over the same period amounted to \$1.1 billion, representing an increase of 33.9 percent compared to the average of 1999. Data provided by the Romanian government list machines and electric equipment, chemical and steel products, plastic materials, medical equipment, land vehicles, and natural gas among its imported goods. Romania's main trading partners are the countries in the Central Eastern Free Trade Agreement (CEFTA), OPEC, the United States, and the European Union.

Romania's National Institute of Business Statistics and Research reports that gross domestic product (GDP) was up 2 percent in the first nine months of 2000 over 1999. The industrial sectors and the building industry, which contributed 35.6 percent to GDP formation, posted gross value added increases of 7.6 percent and 3.5 percent respectively. According to the same source, added values from agriculture went down 6.1 percent, while figures from the tertiary sector remained constant.

The new government sworn in late December 2000 has pledged broad support for market reforms and the goal of European Union accession. The program to re-launch the national economy highlights the commitment to achieve 4.5 to 6 percent growth in GDP, to ensure sustained macro stabilization through structural reform and financial discipline, to accelerate the privatization process, and to support small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). Substantial improvement of the business environment in the context of adequate economic, financial, and legal framework is a priority.

The recently established Ministry for Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises has pledged to facilitate the formation of over 750,000 jobs in the next four years. Law 133/1999 has been reinstated, providing important facilities for the SME sector activities such as: custom duties exemptions for imported cars; equipment, and know-how; exemptions for imported raw materials required for manufacturing processes; improved access of SMEs to public acquisitions of goods works and services; income tax exemptions for reinvested gross profits; and a 20 percent cut of the income tax for achieving at least 10 percent increase in employment relative to the previous year.

According to the Ministry of Public Information, a foreign investment code will establish fiscal incentives for foreign investors. Heralding the new strategy on privatization and the development of the private sector, the government dissolved the State Ownership Fund and established the Authority for Privatization and the Administration of State Assets. The new agency will sell the state's stocks in private companies, monitor companies' post-privatization activities and compliance with privatization contracts, restructure state companies, and will accelerate privatization process by transferring state responsibilities in managing state shares to ministries and other public authorities.

The Ministry of Public Finance will submit the 2001 budget to the Parliament by the end of February 2001. According to the new finance minister, Mr. Mihai Tanasescu, 4 to 5 percent economic growth, an inflation rate of 24 to 30 percent, and a 9.5 to 9.8 percent unemployment rate are the major targets of the 2001 budget.

An upcoming issue of the Commercial Update will feature a special supplement highlighting commercial opportunities in Romania.

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Central and Eastern European Commercial Update

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Ecolinks Trade Leads

Czech Republic

Eco-Building, a company in the Czech Republic, seeks an American partner or technology provider to participate in the pursuit of projects in the area of advanced ash treatment. Specifically, the company seeks technologies associated with ash-blending centers with two levels of homogenization of fluid and bed ashes and their consequent solidification. Eco-Building is now working on a large project of ash blending/utilization in Ukraine. Eco-Building is focused on providing services for large energy producers with output of at least 50,000 tons of ash per year. In the last four years, Eco-Building has realized five technological complexes for ash stabilization worth a total of \$10 million. View the entire lead at www.usgtn.org or contact Zdenek.Svoboda@mail.doc.gov.

Millenium Technologies, a company in the Czech Republic, is searching for waste-to-energy technology that changes plastic and rubber waste into gas or oil. One example of this type of technology is pyrolysis recycling. Millenium currently estimates that the volume of rubber and plastic to be processed will be at least 10,000 tons per year. View the entire lead at www.usgtn.org or contact Zdenek.Svoboda@mail.doc.gov.

Hungary

Consact Ltd., an environmental consulting company in Budapest, seeks to purchase U.S. technologies and services for treating wastewater being produced by a fish-processing company in a Hungarian national park. Since a non-chemical solution is preferred, Consact would like to find a U.S. provider experienced in the development of constructed wetland for the purpose of treating high-strength BOD. The project may also include wastewater treatment for two of the surrounding smaller settlements. At present, the fish processor discharges its wastewater, 100 cubic meters per day, into a collecting tank. The discharge is then transported by truck to a sewage plant. View the entire lead at www.usgtn.org or contact Gabor.Kaczmarczyk@mail.doc.gov.

Forg-Tech Ltd., a manufacturing company in Hungary, is seeking to purchase equipment to recycle plastic and rubber

waste (including household waste and appliances, computers, etc.). With the help of U.S. technology, the company plans to manufacture marketable products such as granulate, fiber, and other ready-made products (speed bumps, protecting barriers, road signs, etc.). View the entire lead at www.usgtn.org or contact Gabor.Kaczmarczyk@mail.doc.gov.

Poland

The Polish city of Konin seeks a U.S. partner to participate in the creation of a processing facility for recyclables. The city is willing to contribute about \$1 million to this enterprise. Konin expects the American partner to establish a joint-venture enterprise with the city or to create its own company. The city offers two hectares of developed land as well as energy delivery. The city is currently finalizing a project for a compost and waste separation facility that is supposed to begin full operation by the end of 2001. It is expected that about 5,000 to 7,000 tons of recyclables can be obtained from the separation station. These recyclables are plastic, paper, glass, and rubber. This joint venture would be expected to address at least two of the recyclable materials. View the entire lead at www.usgtn.org or contact Ania.Janczewska@mail.doc.gov.

Ekolog, a company in Poland, seeks new technologies for the utilization of sediments from wastewater treatment plants and the disposal of hazardous waste. Having solved the problem of municipal wastewater treatment in the city of Torun, Ekolog won the bidding for sediments treatment to expand the existing facility. Ekolog specializes in the design and production of environment protection devices, including wastewater treatment plants. Its primary activities concern wastewater treatment and sludge management. Ekolog has worked on more than 200 municipal and industrial wastewater treatment plants and is one of the strongest environmental companies in Poland. View the entire lead at www.usgtn.org or contact Ania.Janczewska@mail.doc.gov.

Romania

S.C. Petromidia S.A., a company in Romania, seeks a joint venture partner

with technologies to recover and re-use the slop oil and sludge resulting from the processes of cleaning oil product storage tanks and treating wastewater. Petromidia has three ecological landfills of 250,000 cubic meters total storing capacity, of which two are already exceeding total capacity and the third is filled to 80 percent. In these landfills, Petromidia has stored filtrated and thick sludge and slop oil. The company intends to recover and utilize the oil product from the sludge and slop and to process it in its existing refinery plant. It is estimated that Petromidia could recover the equivalent of 22,000 tons of oil product with an estimated value of \$100 per ton, meaning \$2.2 million. Through the distillation process, products such as gases, gasoline, diesel oil, and fuel oil may be recovered. View the entire lead at www.usgtn.org or contact Adriana.Mircea@mail.doc.gov.

S.C. Ampelum S.A. of Romania would like to build a cogenerative system in order to produce energy. The system will produce energy primarily by using a gas turbine burning methane gas and operating a synchron generator engine to produce the final power. A heat exchanger will convert the surplus of the burned gases into thermal power. The system will supply 5.91 Gcal/h thermal power and 2 megawatts of power, having the efficiency for the methane gas of minimum 70 percent. View the entire lead at www.usgtn.org or contact Dana.Dobrescu@mail.doc.gov.

If you are not registered to the GTN web site but would like to view these or other leads, please contact GTN's EcoLinks analyst: Robert Bisceglie, rbisceglie@usgtn.org.

Additional commercial opportunities are available on CEEBICnet (www.mac.doc.gov/eebic/ceebic.html).

EU Enlargement "Road Show" Bringing U.S. Embassy Experts to Philadelphia, Chicago, Denver in March

Did you know that the world's largest export market is about to get even bigger? The European Union is expected to accept six to ten new member countries in the intermediate future, adding about 80 million new customers to the European Single Market. The Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland are the largest countries moving quickly to join the EU. They have already joined NATO and they are now rushing to meet the EU's entry requirements. This means unprecedented new opportunities for American exporters. The U.S. Commercial Service is advising U.S. firms that now is an excellent time to explore these markets.

In a unique opportunity for you to meet in-country experts, the Senior Commercial Officers from our U.S. embassies in Prague, Budapest and Warsaw will make special presentations in Philadelphia, Chicago and Denver entitled "EU Enlargement: New Opportunities for U.S. Firms" and afterwards will hold private one-to-one counseling sessions with you to discuss specific market entry strategies. They will also make special presentations in Philadelphia and Denver on environmental opportunities that have arisen as a result of the EU enlargement process.

Dates and contacts for each city are:

Philadelphia

Monday, March 12

Morning Seminar on EU Enlargement

Afternoon Seminar on CEE Environmental Opportunities

Contact: Debora Sykes (debora.sykes@mail.doc.gov)

Chicago

Wednesday, March 14

Morning Seminar on EU Enlargement

Contact: Debra Rogers (debra.rogers@mail.doc.gov)

Denver

Thursday, March 15

Afternoon Seminar on CEE Environmental Opportunities

Contact: Lana Lennberg (lana.lennberg@mail.doc.gov)

Friday March 16

Morning Seminar on EU Enlargement

Contact: Martha Butwin (martha.butwin@mail.doc.gov)

Ex-Im Bank's Environmental Export Program

(Source: www.exim.gov)

U.S. environmental firms seeking to export to Central and Eastern Europe may wish to consider the U.S. Export-Import Bank as a possible source of financing. The U.S. Export-Import Bank (Ex-Im) is committed to increasing the level of support it provides to exporters of environmentally beneficial goods and services as well as to exporters participating in foreign environmental projects. To achieve this objective, the bank has designed a special "Environmental Exports Program" that provides enhanced levels of support for a broad range of environmental exports. The program demonstrates the bank's resolve to reach out to small and large exporters of environmental products and services. The major features of the program are:

- A short-term Environmental Export Insurance Policy that will provide enhanced short-term, multibuyer and singlebuyer insurance coverage for small business environmental exporters. Features of the program include policies which deliver 95 percent commercial coverage and 100 percent political coverage with no deductible.
- Enhanced medium and long-term support for environmental projects, products, and services. These enhancements, which are reflected in Ex-Im Bank loan and guarantee programs, include:
 1. Local cost coverage equal to 15 percent of the U.S. contract price.
 2. Capitalization of interest during construction.
 3. Maximum allowable repayment terms permissible under OECD guidelines.

These features are intended to substantially improve the competitive position of U.S. environmental exporters. In addition, the Ex-Im Bank will aggressively use its tied aid

resources to offset foreign concessionary financing offers for environmental projects. Exports of products and services specifically used to aid in the abatement, control, or prevention of air, water, and ground contamination or pollution, or which provide protection in the handling of toxic substances, will be considered eligible for support, subject to a final determination by the bank. The following are examples of the types of exports generally considered eligible:

- Instruments to measure or monitor air or water quality.
- Emission control devices.
- Effluent pollution control devices.
- Equipment for systems for waste disposal, refuse collection and waste water treatment.
- Services to upgrade environmental regulations: environmental assessments, design and training.
- Ecological studies; ecological monitoring equipment
- Toxic material handling devices.
- Certain renewable and alternative energy equipment.

Exports of products and services for foreign environmental projects entirely dedicated to the prevention, control or cleanup of air, water, or ground pollution, including facilities to provide for control or cleanup, and the retrofitting of facility equipment for the sole purpose of mitigating, controlling, or preventing adverse environmental effects, will be considered eligible, subject to final determination by the Ex-Im Bank. Exports for the following types of projects are generally considered eligible:

- Air or water (river) pollution cleanup.
- Ecology or forestry management.
- Certain renewable or alternative energy projects (photovoltaic, wind, hybrid, biomass).
- Water treatment or waste treatment projects.
- Toxic waste or substance cleanup projects.

These examples are illustrative and are not intended to be all inclusive, and eligibility is subject to existing Ex-Im Bank foreign content guidelines.

For more information regarding this program or other Ex-Im Bank programs, go to www.exim.gov.

Recent Environmental Reports Available on CEEBICnet (www.mac.doc.gov/eebic/ceebic.html)

The following reports on environmental opportunities in Central and Eastern Europe were recently placed on CEEBICnet:

Croatia

Environmental Report, Miroslav Nikolac, CEEBIC Trade Specialist, U.S. Embassy Zagreb, November 2000

Czech Republic

Market Trends of the Waste Industry, Zdenek Svoboda, U.S. Commercial Service, U.S. Embassy Prague, January 2001

Hungary

Environmental Technology Market, Gabor Kaczmarczyk, EcoLinks Technical Representative, U.S. Embassy Budapest, December 2000

Croatia: Market Opportunities in the Environmental Sector

Croatia is one of the emerging markets in Central and Eastern Europe that is not plagued by many of the severe environmental problems experienced by neighboring countries in the region. Croatia's development strategy, which dates back to when it was a republic in Yugoslavia, has focused on the development of the tourism sector and not on industrial development. Regardless there are still environmental problems that Croatia must address. This has created a demand for U.S. environmental technology.

The best prospects for U.S. firms include: water quality maintenance and monitoring, wastewater treatment, urban and industrial waste management, and treatment and disposal of hazardous waste.

A major obstacle, facing U.S. companies exporting environmental technology to Croatia, is financing. U.S. firms should be aware that local municipalities and companies in Croatia are expected to finance their own transactions without assistance from the national government. There are a number of mechanisms that U.S. companies may consider including financing through EcoLinks or the U.S. Export Import Bank. In addition, U.S. companies may wish to explore procurement opportunities through projects underwritten by the World Bank, the European Investment Bank (EIB) or the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD).

For more information, visit CEEBICnet at www.mac.doc.gov/eebic/ceebic.html or call 202-482-2645.

Calendar of Events

February

2/3-2/12 U.S. Department of Agriculture Agribusiness Investment & Trade Mission to Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania

Contact: Jim O'Meara, Tel: (202) 690-3982, Fax: (202) 690-3982, E-mail: omeraj@fas.usda.gov

2/15 CEEBIC Breakfast Briefing: Opportunities and Barriers As a Result of EU Accession, Washington, DC

Contact: Michael Rogers Tel: (202) 482-2645, Fax (202) 482-3898, E-mail: ceebic@ita.doc.gov

March

3/8 CEEBIC Business Briefing: Commercial Opportunities in Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania

Contact: Andrea Lupo Tel: (202) 482-2645, Fax (202) 482-3898, E-mail: ceebic@ita.doc.gov

For a more complete list of events, go to CEEBICnet, www.mac.doc.gov/eebic/ceebic.html

This notice is provided solely as an informational resource and does not constitute U.S. Department of Commerce endorsement of these events. All information regarding these events is subject to change without notice by the organizers of those events.



CEEBIC Breakfast Briefing

Opportunities and Barriers for U.S. Companies as a Result of EU Accession

February 15, 2001
9:00 am to 10:00 am

U.S.A. Trade Center
Mezzanine Level
Ronald Reagan Building
1300 Pennsylvania Ave. NW
Washington, D.C.

Topics will include:

- Why invest in Accession Countries?
- Export Opportunities As a Result of Accession
- Tariff Differentials and the Impact on U.S. Exports
- Barriers Stemming from New Standards Requirements

RSVP your attendance by February 13, 2000 to Michael Rogers at tel: (202) 482-2645, fax: (202) 482-3898, email: ceebic@ita.doc.gov. Please include your name, company, telephone number, and fax number.

For more information, go to www.mac.doc.gov/eebic/upevents/ceebicbreakfast.htm

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